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# MODERN LANGUAGE NOTES

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## AN ENGLISH PRECURSOR OF ROUSSEAU <sup>1</sup>

The facts that emerge from the three, in part contradictory, versions of the story of Rousseau's inception of the idea of his first *Discours* seem to be that the negative side of the question proposed by the Dijon Academy appealed to Rousseau, that he was confirmed by Diderot in his choice of that side, and that Marmontel, because of his hatred of Rousseau, attributed to Diderot all the merit of the election of the negative.<sup>2</sup> That Rousseau

<sup>1</sup>The suggestion of the possible relationship between Lyttelton and Rousseau was made to me by Professor Arthur O. Lovejoy, to whom I am further indebted for much valuable criticism and for several references embodied in the following paper.

<sup>2</sup>Rousseau's own account is in the *Confessions*, book viii, and at greater length but without change in any essential fact in his *Deuxième Lettre à M. de Malesherbes*, 1762. Marmontel's version (that Rousseau actually told Diderot that he intended to support the affirmative side and was dissuaded therefrom by Diderot) is in his *Mémoires*, book vii. Diderot's version (that to his remark "You must take the side that no one will think of taking" Rousseau replied, "You are right") is in his *Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron*, chapter 67. Critics are inclined to disregard Marmontel's story and to attempt a reconciliation of Rousseau's and Diderot's, as in my text. See among other authorities: John Morley, *Rousseau*, Macmillan, I, 134, note 2; Emile Faguet, *Vie de Rousseau*, Soc. fr. d'Imp. et de Lib., p. 167; Jules Lemaitre, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Calmann-Lévy, p. 80. Louis Ducros on the other hand, after an examination of Rousseau's writings before the first *Discours*, asserts roundly that "Rousseau was the only person who inspired Jean-Jacques" (*Jean-Jacques Rousseau de Genève à l'Hermitage*, Fontemoing, p. 180). P. M. Masson, *La Formation religieuse de Rousseau*, Hachette, 1916, p. 165 f. (especially p. 166, note 1), follows closely Rousseau's own accounts, declaring that there is no reason for suspecting them. He calls attention to the passage

borrowed from previous writers was asserted by Diderot, and his specific obligations have been a matter of serious inquiry.<sup>3</sup> Even if we accept his own account of how the inspiration came to him, the fact remains that in defending the thesis that the progress of the arts and sciences had contributed to corrupt rather than to purify morals, far from propounding something hitherto unheard of, he was giving expression, adequate and impassioned, to opinions that had been discussed for generations. "What he took for a novelty," says Beaudouin,<sup>4</sup> "had been for centuries a familiar object at the cross-roads of literature." The same is true of the second *Discours*. Lemaitre has well said<sup>5</sup> that what is true in both Discourses is the seriousness with which the hitherto harmless paradox is taken, and Mornet<sup>6</sup> has shown that their novelty

in the *Dialogues* (*Œuvres*, Hachette, ix, 213 f.) in which Rousseau states that "an indistinct feeling, a confused notion," of the doctrines set forth in the first *Discours* had been in his mind "from his youth."

<sup>3</sup>Gustav Krueger (*Fremde Gedanken in J. J. Rousseaus erstem Discours*, Halle, 1891; also in *Archiv f. d. Stud. d. neueren Sp. u. Litt.*, lxxxvi, 259 f.) notes specific obligations to Montaigne, Hobbes, Locke, and Mandeville, with possible indebtedness to other writers. These borrowings are, however, of a general nature and are nearly always acknowledged by Rousseau himself. Of Krueger's dissertation Ducros has said (*op. cit.*, p. 176): "His title is misleading and his thesis proves nothing: even if Rousseau appropriated the thoughts that he found in the writings of other men, these thoughts have become his own. . . . Many others before him had defended the paradox that he develops, but their works and even their names are absolutely forgotten." An article supplementing Krueger's investigation and written independently is L. Delaruelle, "Les Sources Principales de J.-J. Rousseau dans le Premier Discours à l'Académie de Dijon," *Rev. d'hist. litt. de la Fr.*, 1912, xix, 245 f. P. M. Masson, "Sur les Sources de Rousseau," *ibid.*, p. 640 f., adds St. Aubin's *Traité de l'Opinion*, 1733 and establishes it, I think, convincingly, as an immediate source. A like inquiry with regard to the second *Discours* has been pursued by Jean Morel. See "Recherches sur les Sources du Discours sur l'Inégalité," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, v, 119 f. The more important results of Morel's researches have been summarized by C. E. Vaughan, *The Political Writings of Rousseau*, Cambridge, The University Press, i, 120 f. On anticipations in eighteenth century thought of the religious element in the two *Discours* see Masson, *op. cit.*, chapter vii, especially p. 226 f.

<sup>4</sup>Henri Beaudoin, *La Vie et les Œuvres de Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, Lamulle et Poisson, i, 220.

<sup>5</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 87.

<sup>6</sup>D. Mornet, "L'Influence de J. J. Rousseau au XVIIIe Siècle," *Annales de la Société Jean-Jacques Rousseau*, viii, 33 f.

and power lay not in the matter but in the manner, not in the subject but in the presentation. The idea of the State of Nature, with other concomitant or consequent theories, is a commonplace of the time. I wish here to call attention to an almost complete anticipation of Rousseau that tends to support this view of the matter. Whether or not it may be considered as a direct source of the two *Discours* is of secondary importance but shall be discussed later.

The vogue of the "Letters from a Foreign Visitor" type of satire, started by the success of the *Turkish Spy* of Marana and Cotelendi and given new life by its employment in *The Spectator*, reached its height of literary art in the *Lettres persanes* of Montesquieu, 1721, which produced a number of imitations. Among the earliest of these was *Letters from a Persian in England to his Friend at Ispahan* by George, first Baron Lyttelton, which was published anonymously in 1735.<sup>7</sup> As the first English translation of Montesquieu's work (by John Ozell) did not appear till 1730 and as in a letter to his father dated February 4, 1728, Lyttelton writes:<sup>8</sup> "I am glad you are pleased with my Persian Letters," it is evident that he was acquainted with the original. He follows Montesquieu closely despite obvious superficial differences. In dispensing with the plot that holds together the letters from Usbek and his friends and with it all but the most conventional orientalism, and in arranging that all the London letters are written by the same visitor, Lyttelton neglects two methods

<sup>7</sup> Published anonymously but included in Lyttelton's *Works*, ed. G. E. Ayscough, London, Dodsley, 1776, 3 vols. My references ["P. L." standing for *Persian Letters*] are to the third edition of this collection, vol. I, p. 129 f. Lord Lyttelton (1709-1773) was a politician who just lacked the ability to become a statesman and depended for success upon the influence of various great families. He was also a very minor poet (see W. J. Courthope, *History of English Poetry*, Macmillan, v, 376 f.); but he is most pleasantly remembered as the friend of Pope and Thomson, and the man to whom *Tom Jones* was dedicated. His *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*, 1747, is memorable for the delightful argument that only the facts as narrated could account for such a conversion and that therefore the narrative must be true. His painstaking *History of Henry II*, 1767-1771, is now forgotten. His *Dialogues of the Dead*, 1760 (in which, as in the juvenile *Persian Letters*, he imitates a French writer) are considerably beneath even those of Prior.

<sup>8</sup> *Works* III, 206. Compare note 12, below.

of exciting interest. But the loss is greater than that of story and variety. There is but a pale reflection of the light keen wit, the unerring shafts of ridicule, the sure and stinging epigrams of Montesquieu. A piece of third-rate journeyman-work has succeeded the work of genius.

For the purpose of our inquiry we are concerned with but a small portion of the *Persian Letters*.<sup>9</sup> It will be remembered that in *Lettres persanes* Usbek sends to Mirza a sketch of the history of the Troglodytes (letters 11 to 14). This history is continued by Selim in Lyttelton's book; it is addressed to Mirza, the mutual friend of both travelers. "We have often read together and admired," Selim writes (p. 159), "the little history of the Troglodytes, related by our countryman Usbec [*sic*] with a spirit peculiar to his writings," and he announces his purpose to continue the history of that people. In order to follow the continuation of Montesquieu's narrative it is necessary to summarize briefly the original "History."

The Troglodytes, a ferocious people, were governed with great severity by a foreign king, till at last they rose against him and utterly rooted out his entire line. Magistrates were then chosen, but their rule, too, became intolerable and they were killed. The people then decided to have no rulers at all, to break off all social bonds and obligations, and to arrange that each individual look after his own affairs without concern for those of other men. The result was fatal. In times of drought those in the uplands starved for lack of supplies from the valleys; in times of flood the case was reversed. All sorts of crimes were perpetrated and those not aggrieved thereby looked on unconcerned. At last came a great pestilence and many men died. A great physician came from another country and saved the lives of many; but when the plague was stayed and he went to collect his just dues from those whom he had cured, they one and all refused him and he returned home penniless. When next the plague came there was no skilful physician to aid them. So this wretched people perished, all but two families who, unlike their wicked countrymen, had lived innocently. These now profited by the awful example set before them, and

<sup>9</sup>To save space I postpone any account of the entire book till the completion of a study of the "Letters from a Foreign Visitor" type which I have in hand.

as they increased in numbers the younger generation was reared with ideas of love, fellowship, and unselfishness in their hearts. The elders taught them that individual interest is always best found in the common interest. But this peace and innocence by no means connoted softness and cowardice, and this a neighboring nation found to its cost when it invaded the country of the Troglodytes and its armies were put to flight. The new Troglodytes continued to flourish till in an evil moment they decided to choose a king to rule over them.<sup>10</sup> For this office they selected a venerable old man. With his words on being notified of their choice Usbek's history closes:

I see clearly what is the matter, O Troglodytes! Your virtue is beginning to become burdensome to you. In your present state, without any ruler, you have to be virtuous in spite of yourselves; else you could not live as you do and would fall back into the miseries of your forefathers. But this yoke is too heavy for you: you prefer to become subject to a prince and to obey laws that he will impose, laws less rigid than the customs that you have to follow now. You are well aware that you will then be able to satisfy your ambition, to acquire wealth, and to languish in cowardly pleasures; and that provided you avoid great crimes you will have no need of virtue.<sup>11</sup>

Such words would furnish more than a hint to him who should undertake a history of the later times of the Troglodytes, for Montesquieu's evident implication is that from the moment of choosing a king they commenced to decline from their position of prosperity and virtue. Lyttelton takes up the story at this point; Selim writes:<sup>12</sup>

Unequal as I am to the imitation of so excellent an author, I have a mind, in a continuation of that story, to shew thee by what steps, and through what changes, the original good of society is overturned, and mankind become wicked and more miserable in a state of government, than they were when left in a state of nature.

<sup>10</sup> It is noteworthy that Montesquieu makes no attempt to explain how the idea of choosing a king came to the Troglodytes. For the possible source of Lyttelton's view of the origin of kingship see note 39, below.

<sup>11</sup> *Lettres persanes*, Garnier Frères, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> *P. L.*, p. 159. A marginal gloss refers to "Persian Letters from Paris, vol. I. Let. xi. to xiv." This indicates that, besides his knowledge of the original work, Lyttelton had before him an English translation.

The course of Selim's exposition of this thesis is as follows:

The pleading of the old man induced the Troglodytes to put aside their desire for a king, and they continued to live under "the law of nature and uncorrupted reason" until their enemies returned in greater numbers than before and defeated them. To expel the invaders it was necessary to select a military leader and unite under him. A brave and resourceful young man was chosen and under his direction the foes were driven out. The general then advised that the war be carried into the enemies' country, and in spite of the warnings of the older Troglodytes this revengeful invasion was successfully accomplished. By this their leader was so exalted in the estimation of the Troglodytes that they made him their king. The conquered land was divided among those who had won the victory.

Distinction of rank and inequality of condition were then first introduced among the Troglodytes: some grew rich and immediately comparison made others poor. From this single root sprang up a thousand mischiefs; pride, envy, avarice, discontent, deceit, and violence.<sup>13</sup>

Disputes and grievances necessitated fixed laws, and the king chose a body of wise old men—the Senate—to advise him. The institution of laws had the ill effect "that they began to think everything was right which was not legally declared to be a crime."<sup>14</sup> Presently the original, loose, general laws came to be inadequate to deal with particular cases, and in the attempt to remedy this defect the laws became increasingly complex and difficult of interpretation. So there grew up a group of Troglodytes who undertook to expound the laws and settle disputes, and this, not for love of neighbor and in the cause of justice, but for gain. Hence arose the evils of protracted and technical legislation.<sup>15</sup> The primitive religion of the people underwent a change analogous to that of their manners; superstition introduced itself.<sup>16</sup> The son of

<sup>13</sup> *P. L.*, p. 163. With this passage compare note 42, below.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 168. Here and elsewhere Lyttelton refers with satiric intent to actual conditions in England.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170. Lyttelton's words are: "Their morals being corrupted, their religion could not long continue pure: superstition found means to introduce itself, and compleated their depravation." Note that he does not account for the origin of superstition.

the first king had succeeded his father, not through any hereditary principle but because of the love that the nation bore to his family. This second king now had his father deified,—a proceeding that shows how superstition had changed the religion of the land. The priests hunted for sinecures, simony was rife, worship became splendid and hypocritical. Men believed God's anger at theft might be appeased "by an offering made out of the spoil."<sup>17</sup> Priests made no attempt to reform the morals of those in their charge; their concern was only with men's opinions.<sup>18</sup> The tie between the court and the church was very close, and to gain favor and power the clergy inculcated the doctrine of divine right which greatly aided in the development of absolutism. This second king was powerful and ambitious and was at last killed in an unsuccessful war of conquest. His successor came to the throne, not by the free choice of the people, but *de jure divino*. He was young, soft, and pleasure-loving; and under his influence the Troglodytes "began to polish and soften their manners."<sup>19</sup> They traveled and brought home ideas of luxury which created a thousand wants hitherto unknown. Their morals became lax, their minds depraved, and their bodies weak.<sup>20</sup> When they had thus grown "polite" the Troglodytes interested themselves in the arts and sciences. In their former simple state they had had time for only the practical sciences: mechanics, agriculture, and medicine, with which last their few ailments rendered a rudimentary acquaintance sufficient. As for the arts, of old they had amused themselves with poetry and music and with the invention of fables to which a moral was generally attached.<sup>21</sup> History they

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173. The allusion is of course to the abuse of indulgences.

<sup>18</sup> The satire here is directed against the various theological controversies of the eighteenth century.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178. Note especially: "The women brought their children with more pain, and even thought themselves too delicate to nurse them." Though Lyttelton wrote very shortly after Toland's *Directions for Breeding of Children*, 1726, in which the placing of children out at nurse is spoken of as merely the normal procedure, he anticipates, long before Morelly and Buffon, one of Rousseau's most famous, influential, and practical doctrines: the nursing of children by their own mothers—doubtless a commonplace by the time that Rousseau wrote *Emile* but by no means so trite in 1735.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179. This portion of Lyttelton's narrative goes back, to some



had neglected save for the bare record of public transactions. Now, in their more cultured state, there began much abstract speculation and many sects and systems of philosophy arose. Occupation with such matters withdrew many of the wisest men from the service of the commonwealth, the introduction of philosophy being thus detrimental to the public good. The court, meanwhile, became a centre of corruption. The slothful king delegated his powers to a grand vizir, and soon a coterie of women (the king's mistress, the vizir's mistress, and other such) controlled affairs with their own selfish ends always in view. The nation at last aroused itself to remedy this corrupt absolutism and reforms were carried out vigorously and justly by which, though the hereditary principle was preserved, powers that limited the monarchy were given to the Senate and the ministers were made responsible to the people.<sup>22</sup> On the whole affairs were now better, though delays in legislation increased and the evils of party politics began to appear. At last a certain man told the king how to get back much of his lost power, namely, by setting up private interest against public.<sup>23</sup>

extent even verbally, to the penultimate paragraph of Montesquieu's twelfth letter.

<sup>22</sup> It is hardly necessary to point out the references to the corruption of Restoration court life and the reforms instituted after the Revolution of 1688.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188. "Shew those who lead the people," said this adviser, "that they may better find their account in betraying than in defending them." The cynical nature of this conclusion was evidently occasioned by observation of the shameless corruption and bribery which flourished under Walpole's administration. While on the continent during an unusually extended "grand tour" (1728-1731), Lyttelton had written: "The spirit of Whiggism grows upon me under the influence of arbitrary power" (*Works* III, 282), and there are frequent remarks that show his respect for Sir Horace Walpole. But on his return to England he became a member of the Opposition party of "Patriots" which Bolingbroke had been organizing since his return from exile and which comprehended not only Tories but malcontent Whigs (*Cambridge Modern History* VI, 71). Lyttelton and the youthful William Pitt became two of the most prominent opponents of Walpole's corrupt methods of administration. We have seen that part at least of the *Persian Letters* was in existence in 1728, but I suspect that much of the satire dates from the time of Lyttelton's active opposition to Walpole, which was at its height in 1735, the year of the publication of the *Letters*.

To anyone acquainted with Rousseau's two *Discours* it must be obvious that they do not cover precisely the same ground as the continuation of the History of the Troglodytes. There is in Lyttelton nothing to correspond to the description of the state of nature which occupies the first part of the *Discours sur l'Inégalité*. On the other hand, Lyttelton's account of the corruptions in the church are not paralleled in Rousseau save in the most general way.<sup>23a</sup> It is obvious, moreover, that neither *Discours* supports quite the same thesis as that advocated by Lyttelton. Lyttelton's is broader in scope and includes the subject of both Rousseau's treatises (with the omission, as I have said, of the Roussellian state of nature) and something more. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader that the *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* must be regarded as but one side-issue embraced in the larger question of the *Discours sur l'Origine de l'Inégalité*.<sup>24</sup>

Like Montesquieu, Lyttelton treats of one people only; Rousseau generalizes for all humanity. I cannot agree with those writers who, like Morel,<sup>25</sup> hold that Rousseau's aim was to construct a true historic account of the development of human society. I cannot accept the theory that the famous remark "Let us begin by putting the facts to one side" was due to anxiety to conciliate the Church. One must approach Rousseau's point of view from another direction; Beaudoin and Lemaitre point the way. The former notes<sup>26</sup> that those vices of society which Rousseau enumerates with most complacency are the faults of the great world and the salons. His satire spends itself especially upon his contemporaries. Lemaitre<sup>27</sup> interprets Rousseau's use of the word "corruption" as applicable particularly to the conventions,

<sup>23a</sup> On the religious element in the first *Discours* see Masson, *op. cit.*, p. 166 f. and, for the second *Discours*, p. 213 f. Masson notes that religion was bound to profit by Rousseau's "impassioned return to the past" and that religion presented itself to him as one of the remedies for science and philosophy. The desire to rehabilitate "ces vieux mots de patrie et de religion" certainly indicates a dissatisfaction with contemporary ecclesiastical affairs, but there is no such direct satire as is found in Lyttelton.

<sup>24</sup> To give an analysis of each *Discours* might make for clearness but would occupy much space. Morley's fifth chapter (*op. cit.*, I, 132 f.) contains good summaries; and many other such are easily accessible.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.* Morel's general conclusion is stated on p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 228.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 84.

prejudices, worldly deceptions, luxury, softness, frivolities, and artificialities of the life of the fashionable salons. The latest student of Rousseau's political thought, Professor Vaughan,<sup>28</sup> has adopted this interpretation of the second *Discours*. He writes:

The opinion that the *Discourse* is a treatise on political theory . . . must be rejected. . . . The chief purpose of the writer is to expose the vices which for ages have poisoned the life both of the individual and the race.

This is the first point of connection with Lyttelton; both *Discours* are, like the History of the Troglodytes, satires on society.

At the end of Montesquieu's account of the Troglodytes and the beginning of Lyttelton's they are living under "the law of nature and uncorrupted reason,"<sup>29</sup> in a state of society that about corresponds to the Lockean idea of the state of nature and precisely corresponds to that first remove from the state of nature, according to Rousseau, in which men are no longer solitary, wandering, homeless, self-concerned and self-dependent individuals, but are in that happy period of development in which the family is considered as the centre of society but wherein the good of the individual is subordinated to the good of the whole. How was this stage reached according to Rousseau? Differences of environment gradually superinduced differences in manner of life; each man saw that those savages with whom he came oftenest in contact were actuated by desires and needs such as his own; a sort of union began where united efforts promised more than the individual had hitherto achieved.<sup>30</sup> Lyttelton is not troubled with the need to account for the arrival of the Troglodytes at this stage of development, since when he takes up Montesquieu's narrative that stage is already reached. He is able to assume so much. It would seem, though he is here rather vague, that he allows the Troglodytes the right of ownership in equal shares.<sup>31</sup> Here is a marked distinction from

<sup>28</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 14.

<sup>29</sup> *P. L.*, p. 160. References to the *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* are to the Hachette edition of Rousseau's *Œuvres complètes*, vol. I ("Hachette"); those to the *Discours sur l'Inégalité* are to Vaughan's edition of the *Political Writings*, vol. I ("Vaughan"). It is to be regretted that the first *Discours* is not in Vaughan's collection.

<sup>30</sup> Vaughan, p. 170 f.

<sup>31</sup> This is at least open to question; if Lyttelton conceives the happy Troglodytes as holding their possessions in common he is all the nearer

Rousseau who, in the most famous passage in either *Discours*, traces to the institution of the idea of property, though the immediate consequences were not terrible, the woes of civilization.

This stage of development, "keeping a happy balance between the idleness of the primitive state and the petulant activity of our modern selfishness,"<sup>32</sup> Rousseau imagines to have been the happiest through which humanity has passed. Lyttelton's view is the same. The Troglodytes were skilled in mechanics and agriculture; Rousseau allows some knowledge of the latter to man in this stage of growth though he finds in agriculture and metallurgy the arts that led directly to the institution of property.<sup>33</sup> Lyttelton<sup>34</sup> tells how at their leisure the Troglodytes

amused themselves with music and poetry, and sung the praises of the Divine Being, the beauties of nature, the virtues of their countrymen, and their own loves.

Such rudimentary efforts towards the arts are also admitted by Rousseau and he finds in the rivalry occasioned thereby the first step towards inequality.<sup>35</sup> Why, then, did mankind ever abandon this happy life? Rousseau ascribes the change to "some wretched chance";<sup>36</sup> Lyttelton, whose assumption (derived from Montesquieu) of neighbors to the Troglodytes not living in the same stage of society as theirs and able to influence their development is an important distinction from Rousseau, accounts for the change by inroads from these nearby nations that forced the Troglodytes to unite under a single chief.

As the danger required vigour and alacrity, they pitched upon a young man of distinguished courage, and placed him at their head.<sup>37</sup>

Note that this is a physical basis of choice and corresponds to those natural differences between men which Rousseau grants have always existed, though originally in less marked degree than now.<sup>38</sup> The

to Rousseau. Montesquieu himself is not clear on the question of property; he says that the good Troglodytes "regarded themselves as one family; the herds were *almost always* [my italics] kept in common" (*confondus*). But in the next letter he makes a Troglodyte speak of "my father's field." (See *Lettres persanes*, XII and XIII.)

<sup>32</sup> Vaughan, p. 170 f.      <sup>34</sup> *P. L.*, p. 179.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>35</sup> Vaughan, p. 174.

<sup>37</sup> *P. L.*, p. 160.

<sup>38</sup> Vaughan, p. 140 and p. 166.

successful general of the Troglodytes presently becomes their king; <sup>39</sup> Rousseau accounts for the origin of monarchy in the same way. <sup>40</sup> But he categorically denies the possibility that kings existed before laws and in this is directly opposed to Lyttelton:

To say that chiefs were chosen before the confederation was accomplished and that those who administered the laws existed before the laws themselves is a supposition which one cannot combat seriously.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> Compare Pope's view of the origin of tyranny (*Essay on Man*, III, 245 f.):

"Force made the Conquest, and that conquest, Law;  
'Till Superstition taught the tyrant awe,  
Then shar'd the Tyranny, then lent it aid,  
And Gods of Conquerors, Slaves of Subjects made."

Pope distinguishes between tyrants and those rulers of an earlier, better time who had "sway" in accordance with the "common int'rest" (lines 209-210). He thus agrees with, or rather anticipates, Rousseau's view that the institution of laws preceded the choice of rulers. With the entire History of the Troglodytes should be compared the account of the State of Nature in the *Essay on Man* (III, 147 f.) Here arises a question of priority that can be barely touched upon now and that I am unable to answer satisfactorily. Pope knew Lyttelton; in *The First Epistle of the First Book of Horace* (lines 27 f.) occur the lines:

"Sometimes a Patriot, active in debate,  
Mix with the World, and battle for the State,  
Free as young Lyttelton, her Cause pursue,  
Still true to Virtue, and as warm as true."

This tribute, published in 1737, testifies to an acquaintance of some years' standing; what makes this the more likely is that Lyttelton's alliance with Bolingbroke, the intimate friend of Pope, dates, as I have said, from 1731. Now some at least of the *Persian Letters* were in existence in 1728. It is just possible that Pope may have seen Lyttelton's manuscript (for there is no indication that there was a printed text of the *Letters* in circulation so early) and have derived therefrom his glorification of the State of Nature. If, on the other hand, the portion of the *Letters* that contains the History of the Troglodytes dates from after 1733, the year of the publication of the third Epistle of the *Essay on Man*, Lyttelton's whole History may be a mere elaboration of suggestions obtained from Pope. Or Bolingbroke, who supplied Pope with so much material for the *Essay*, may well have stimulated Lyttelton's mind in this realm of speculation. The whole question at least serves to illustrate further the wide currency that such ideas had obtained long before Rousseau.

<sup>40</sup> Vaughan, p. 189.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184.

The conqueror-king of the Troglodytes divided the territory of their vanquished foes "among those who were companions of his victory," keeping of course a share for himself. Through this act distinction of rank and inequality of condition came among the Troglodytes; "some grew rich and immediately comparison made others poor." In this passage are the essentials of Rousseau's doctrine that in the institution of private property lay the primary cause of social inequality and hence of moral evil.<sup>42</sup> Lyttelton, as we have seen, admits that institution among his happy Troglodytes; but property then existed in equal proportions; *now* the king's followers have more than other folk, and this inequality is "the sad source of all our woe." Rousseau enlarges upon the idea but with no fundamental change. "Unheard of disorders" followed the unequal division of property among the Troglodytes;<sup>43</sup> for the same reason "new-born society," according to Rousseau,<sup>44</sup> "gave place to the most horrible state of war." Hence, according to both writers, the need to determine right by stated laws. Lyttelton, lacking Rousseau's deep sense of social injustice and his bitter feeling towards the wealthy classes, does not see in this institution a conspiracy on the part of the rich to retain their disproportionate share of the world's goods and to hinder the poor from ever regaining that of which they had been deprived by force or fraud. The people, according to Lyttelton,<sup>45</sup> "freely bound themselves, by consenting to such regulations as the king and senate should decree"; there is no hint that they suspected chicane. Both writers

<sup>42</sup> Lyttelton here anticipates by twenty years the enunciation of this doctrine in Morelly's *Code de la Nature* from which Rousseau is generally thought to have derived his views on the subject of property. Rousseau, despite his eloquent denunciation of property, is a bit vague on the subject. He speaks of the "sort of property" which was established at the same time with the distinction of men by families (Vaughan, p. 172). Later he says that if the balance could have remained exact all might have been well; "but the proportion . . . was soon broken" (p. 178). He also notes that wealth must first have consisted in land and cattle, and that quarrels did not result until individual properties had so grown as to cover the whole earth and overlap (p. 179). With Lyttelton's idea of the relativity of poverty and wealth, already quoted, compare, from the *Réponse au Roi de Pologne*: "The words poor and rich are relative, and wherever men are equal there will be neither rich nor poor" (Hachette, p. 41).

<sup>43</sup> *P. L.*, p. 163.

<sup>44</sup> Vaughan, p. 180.

<sup>45</sup> *P. L.*, p. 164.

hold that the institution of laws, instead of removing injustice, increased it and that the enactment of new laws to remedy individual defects increased the confusion and the inequality of conditions.<sup>46</sup> The result of the confusion following the attempt to regulate disputes by law is, according to both writers, the beginnings of courts and magistrates.<sup>47</sup>

Just at the point where logically the thesis developed in the *Discours sur les Sciences et les Arts* branches off from the main line of Rousseau's theme there follows a parallel side-track in Lyttelton's work. It is unnecessary to examine in detail what has been so often attacked and defended: the self-contradictions in the first *Discours* and the resultant qualifications introduced in the various *Réponses*. But it is convenient to quote the passage which best sums up the position that Rousseau finally adopts:

I never said that luxury was the offspring of the sciences, but that they were born together and that the one was hardly ever found without the other being present also. Here is how I would arrange this genealogy. The primary source of evil is inequality: from inequality came wealth; for the words rich and poor are relative and wherever men are equal there will be neither rich nor poor. Luxury and idleness sprang from wealth; from luxury came the fine arts and from idleness the sciences.<sup>48</sup>

This is precisely Lyttelton's argument. Under their third king the Troglodytes began to polish and soften their manners. They traveled,<sup>49</sup> and new wants were suggested to them every day. Increased knowledge of mechanical contrivances caused a lessening of bodily vigor. When their minds

<sup>46</sup> It is at this point, in Rousseau's view of the matter, that government, whether by king or senate, arises. We have seen that in Lyttelton the king preceded the institution of laws.

<sup>47</sup> There is no exact parallel in Rousseau with Lyttelton's satire upon the law's delays and abuses. But compare various phrases in that remarkable note *i* to the *Discours sur l'Inégalité*, a note that in its indignation and despair recalls Shakespeare's "Tired with all these, for restful death I cry"—and is without Shakespeare's solace.

<sup>48</sup> *Réponse au Roi de Pologne*, Hachette, p. 41. Rousseau's original thesis was that luxury and idleness spring from the arts and sciences; here he is content to affirm the reverse. But he several times declares that more luxury and more idleness follow in the wake of the arts and sciences.

<sup>49</sup> The presupposition of neighbors to the Troglodytes permits Lyttelton to imagine the influence of more civilized peoples upon them. There is of course no parallel to this in Rousseau.

were thus relaxed, their bodies became weak. They now complained that the summer was too hot, and the winter too cold. They lost the use of their limbs, and were carried about on the shoulders of slaves.<sup>50</sup>

Compare the results of increased refinement as set forth in the first *Discours*:

At the same time that the conveniences of life were multiplying, the arts becoming more nearly perfect, and luxury spreading, true courage was growing feeble and the military virtues disappearing.<sup>51</sup>

Again:

If the cultivation of the sciences is harmful to warlike qualities it is even more so to moral qualities.<sup>52</sup>

Rousseau recurs to the idea in the second *Discours*; for example:

As a savage's body was the only tool with which he was acquainted, he used it for different purposes for which for want of practice ours are incapable; and our industry has robbed us of the strength and agility which necessity forced the savage to acquire.<sup>53</sup>

We have seen that the primitive Troglodytes, like Rousseau's people in the state first removed from that of nature, knew the arts of poetry and music. Note now, again, that they have no history except "short accounts of public transactions," "having no party disputes, no seditions, no plots, no intrigues of state to record."<sup>54</sup> Compare Rousseau's question: "What would become of history if there were neither tyrants, nor wars, nor conspirators?"<sup>55</sup> Lyttelton singles out for special reprobation those who, when they might be of service to the state, employ their time in abstract speculation and inquiry into the secrets of nature.<sup>56</sup> This loss Rousseau declares to be one of the worst which the progress of the arts and sciences has occasioned:

Who would . . . pass his life in sterile contemplation, if each man, considering only his duties and the needs of nature, had time only for his country, for the unfortunate, and for his friends?<sup>57</sup>

Note also his impatient demand of "illustrious philosophers" that

<sup>50</sup> *P. L.*, p. 177-178.

<sup>53</sup> Vaughan, p. 143.

<sup>51</sup> Hachette, p. 14.

<sup>54</sup> *P. L.*, p. 179.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>55</sup> Hachette, p. 10. The idea is of course almost proverbial.

<sup>56</sup> *P. L.*, p. 180 f.

<sup>57</sup> Hachette, p. 10.



they show results to justify the time spent upon their investigations.<sup>58</sup>

The last three letters in the History of the Troglodytes deal, as I have pointed out, with actual history and politics in England. There is therefore but one noteworthy parallel with the *Discours* other than vague generalities as to the part played by bribery and corruption in governments. The parallel is contained in Lyttelton's reference to the Revolution of 1688,<sup>59</sup> by means of which the reform of the government was carried out "with equal vigor and moderation," and "many public grievances were redressed." After this reorganization things were on the whole better. Is there an echo of this in Rousseau? The course of the argument of the *Discours sur l'Inégalité* is directly towards despair; Rousseau admits to Stanislas his hopelessness of betterment; "there is no remedy left; unless it be some great revolution."<sup>60</sup> Followers of Rousseau have liked to take this remark as a prophecy of the French Revolution; perhaps it is. But was the prophecy suggested by the remedy of which the Troglodytes availed themselves?

It will be seen that, remarkable as are the resemblances between Lyttelton's and Rousseau's work, resemblances amounting often to identity of doctrine, they are not so close as to warrant the assertion that Rousseau had read the *Persian Letters*. But it remains possible,—I think probable—that he had done so. Before 1750 his knowledge of English was still slight and those authors whom he had read he knew in French translations. Lyttelton's *Persian Letters* had been translated in 1735 or 1736.<sup>61</sup> In 1744 Rousseau had been in Paris in contact with English affairs and the friend of various men, chief among them Diderot, who were interested in English thought and life.<sup>62</sup> A third consideration, that supports the

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>59</sup> *P. L.*, p. 185.

<sup>60</sup> *Réponse au Roi de Pologne*, Hachette, p. 46.

<sup>61</sup> Gustave Lanson, *Manuel bibliographique de la Littérature française moderne*, Hachette, III, 742. (No. 10198), gives the date as 1736; new edition 1770. Pierre Martino, *L'Orient dans la Littérature française au xvii<sup>e</sup> et au xviii<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Hachette, p. 299, note 3, mentions the *Nouvelles lettres persanes, traduites de l'anglais*, with date 1735. This I have not seen, but it can hardly be other than a translation of Lyttelton's book.

<sup>62</sup> Joseph Texte, *Rousseau et les Origines du Cosmopolitisme littéraire au xviii<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, p. 122, gives the names of various men among Rousseau's acquaintances who were interested in English matters.

contention that Rousseau may well have known Lyttelton's imitation of Montesquieu is the fact that it was avowedly such an imitation and that Rousseau, even at the time of writing the *Discours*, was coming under the influence of the *Esprit des Lois* and would have been interested in the work of a disciple of Montesquieu. There is, then, no external evidence that contradicts the belief that Rousseau knew the History of the Troglodytes; the internal evidence has appeared in the course of our examination of the History and the *Discours* and favors the same conclusion. In any case I prefer to leave the minor question of Rousseau's indebtedness an open one. The real interest of the matter is the detailed evidence that it offers that Rousseau's doctrines were the merest common-places of thought, that many theories for which he has received the credit appear in the earlier work of Lyttelton, that the indebtedness of the Frenchman is possible, and that the priority of the Englishman is certain.

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## THE MIRACLE PLAY AT DUNSTABLE

Dr. Coffman<sup>1</sup> has localized the cult of Saint Catherine of Alexandria in the West during the tenth and eleventh centuries at Rouen, Normandy. After further study of this cult, I wish to offer evidence for the view that wherever in Normandy or in England especial honor was paid to Catherine it was always ultimately due to the veneration in which she was held by William the Conqueror and Henry the First of England. The central point of interest in the following discussion lies, however, in Geoffrey's selection of this saint as the subject of his Dunstable play.

The first Western monastery dedicated to Saint Catherine was built on land belonging to Goscelinus d'Arques, a member of the ducal family;<sup>2</sup> was chartered and enriched by Duke Robert the

<sup>1</sup> George Raleigh Coffman, *A New Theory Concerning the Origin of the Miracle Play*, Chicago, 1914, pp. 72-78.

<sup>2</sup> Richard II of Normandy had a son, William d'Arques, who was also Count of Talou (William de Jumièges, *Histoire des Normands*, p. 175). The charter of the Catherine Monastery at Rouen mentions certain gifts from its founder, among them estates in *Tallou*; and in some ancient